

## *Agriculture In Maryland*

---

Farm numbers in Maryland stabilized at 12,400 in 2000, halting a seven year downward trend. The number of farms has declined 18 percent since 1990 when there were 15,200 farms. Total land in farms in 2000 is 2,100,000 acres, also unchanged from 1999. That is a 7 percent drop from 1990 when there were 2,250,000 acres of



farmland. The average farm size remained at 169 acres. The average farm has grown in size since 1990 when there was an average of 148 acres.

Near optimal weather conditions for crop development prevailed throughout the growing season and into harvest. Precipitation was near normal for April and May, but generally above normal for June through September. During October and November rainfall dipped well below normal, allowing harvesting of the late season crops to proceed relatively uninterrupted.

Crop yields were all higher in 2000, compared with the drought reduced yields in 1999. Corn for grain, corn for silage, soybeans and barley yields reached record highs in 2000. Corn for grain averaged 155 bushels per acre. Somerset county had the highest yield at 176.8 bushels per acre, while Queen Anne's county had the largest production. Soybean yields increased by 11 bushels per acre from 1999. The average state yield was 43 bushels per acre. Queen Anne's county is the leading soybean producer, and was also the highest yielding county in 2000.

Wheat production improved resulting in the largest crop since 1997. Acres of wheat

harvested remained at 200,000, while yields increased to 63 bushels per acre. With a record high yield of 82 bushels per acre, barley production was the highest since 1995.

Tobacco acreage continued a downward trend to the lowest harvested acreage on record. Production totaled just over 8.2 million pounds on 5,700 acres and a yield of 1,450 pounds.

Broiler production declined for the second time in the past three years, dipping to the lowest number of birds produced since 1992. Just over 283 million birds were grown in 2000, a 4 percent decline from last year. The number of pounds produced was 1.360 billion, down 8 percent.

Milk production for 2000 totaled 1.35 billion pounds, down 1 percent from 1.37 billion pounds in 1999. Ice cream manufactured in Maryland increased to 20.3 million gallons in 2000, up 2 percent from the 19.9 million gallons produced in 1999. Low fat ice cream production for 2000 totaled 4.81 million gallons, down 10 percent from the 5.37 million gallons produced in 1999.

